

**Division of Children and Family Services
Advisory Board Meeting
July 18, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon
Meeting Minutes**

The Division of Children and Family Services Advisory Board Meeting was held on July 18, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon in Room #5368 in Donaghey Plaza South.

The following members were in attendance:

Connie Hickman, Gary Ewart, Lisa McGee, Dean Burbank, Connie Dyer, Gary Ewart, Renee Robinette, Karen Farst, Consevella James

The following members of DCFS Executive Staff were in attendance:

Pat Page, Dick Powell, Paul Lucas, Larry Graves

The following individuals were also in attendance:

Lisa McGee, Mona Davis

Handouts Distributed:

Agenda

Major themes – from the PIP kickoff

Workgroup list

Minutes:

Pat Page, Director of Division of Children and Family Services, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions from attendees. Pat asked if anyone had any additions to the agenda. No additions were made.

Worker Recruitment/Retention:

There was discussion regarding the purpose of this workgroup. Discussion centered around the focus of recruitment and the successful recruitment on college campuses. Pat indicated that we were still speaking on college campuses but advertising is “shut down”. She did note the Division had 18 stipend students in the spring. The workgroup is asking to add TV ads and to shift focus on people already in the workforce or those who are ready to go back to work vs. college graduates.

Pat discussed the report on stipends. The report showed comparison between those who received stipends vs. those who didn’t, who lasted, what were the results and is there something more we need to do? She discussed that Howard Turney had done some investigation making new worker training a college course. She stated the last part of the year is CORE training and when they graduate they are ready to hit the road. They would

need to explore the IT needs. Gary stated Debra Hurd who is on the committee would be able to report more on this.

Connie Tanner expressed what the Division was doing on the front end to assess quality of applicants. She stated we should look at the hiring process and screening process. Perhaps include testing at the local level including a personality test to see if suited for this particular job and if the person would work well with others.

In addition, retention was discussed as the Division is experiencing a high turnover of staff. The workgroup is speaking with MidSouth and IV-E partners to sponsor a supervisor retreat with a focus on retention. It was noted supervisors are key to retention.

Other topics discussed were the pay plan, on call issue and staff time involved with securing placements. Stressed was the need to find the right placement for the child at the beginning and ensuring we had the type of placements available on the county level. There was discussion regarding the development of a placement directory on share point. It was noted this was already being developed and should be completed soon. There was discussion regarding how information is pulled and how the report of available beds, etc should look on a report. Pat stated there should be analysis of the profiles of foster parents and how many kids are placed in county and out of county.

PIP – Major Themes

The major themes of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) were distributed along with workgroup members. The draft Model of Practice was distributed for the group to review and comment on. There was also discussion on the Model of Practice and how it focuses on family centered practice – early assessment and appropriate plans developed with family involvement.

There was discussion regarding how model of practice crosses every group. In this discussion of concern for the safety of clients was brought up. This is one of the main areas the PIP will address. Pat stated there is a tension between family centered practice and child protection.

There was a lot of discussion on safety plans and safety assessment/risk assessments. It was noted that policy needs to be clarified on safety plans – there is only a reference but no guidance to staff on when to implement one and what needs to be done when one is implemented.

Discussion on how the model of practice addressed safety at each juncture. Dick stated there were action steps that were specific to safety. Connie addressed the concern of the Division having had contact with families however we have not intervened or provided services at the beginning to keep the families from getting into a crisis situation.

There was discussion on the need for increased monitoring of foster homes. It was stated when staff are prioritizing what needs to be done the monitoring of foster homes is

ranked lower in priority. It was noted we need to look at how we manage staff, resources and outcomes. Other discussion included whether psychological evaluations needed to be done on foster/adopt parents – benefits, purpose, quality, etc.

Financial:

Greg reported that the 4th quarter cost allocation numbers were not available but did report the budget for 2009 was \$121 million.

There was discussion regarding the Division's biennial request. It was stated we had asked to restore positions and had asked for additional positions. Connie noted we should look at supplemental funding to give some relief on current fiscal year needs.

It was noted we have a personnel cap we need to stay under. It is not a hiring freeze and the division would be strategically filling positions based on caseloads, etc.

COA reaccreditation:

Larry presented three options the Division has:

1. Pursue
2. Cease and let expire
3. Ask for full calendar year extension

Costs to pursue would be around \$95,000 and costs to extend would be approximately \$3,600. Discussion was around how strained the system was already and the decision was made not to pursue reaccreditation at this time but to focus on Model of Practice.

Child Death Review Committee:

Pat discussed the Child Death Review Committee and how they would be reviewing cases. She also noted there would need to be a review of the protocol with CACD regarding child protection. She also noted that Debbie Roark will be assigned as Interim CPS manager.

Next meeting

Set for October 24, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Conference Room #5368